2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant FAQ

1) **Where do we find information on what costs are allowable?**

   The most comprehensive guidance on allowable expenses can be found in the federal cost principals located in Subpart E of 2 CFR 200. We also anticipate that USDA will publish a list of allowable and unallowable costs when they post this funding opportunity. Questions regarding allowable costs can be directed to the SCBG program manager at jauer@mt.gov.

2) **In appendix B, the application narrative section, it appears that the boxes in the Area of Focus section cannot be checked. Is there a way to fix this issue?**

   Due to an error in the form, you must put your cursor in the box you wish to check and hit the backspace key several times. After hitting the backspace key, it should be possible to type an "x" into the box you wish to indicate.

3) **If our application is accepted for funds, how will funds be distributed?**

   Typically, funds will be distributed to an awarded grantee on a reimbursement basis. It is also possible for a grantee to request funds on an advance basis however, documentation standards for expenses are higher. Details on grantee payments are listed in the 2015 SCBG Grant Management Manual.

4) **May we use staff at Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) as a resource in preparing our grant application?**
5) **Will MDA staff review my application prior to submittal?**

   MDA staff involved in the making for Specialty Crop Block Grants (SCBG) may only provide responses to applicant's technical questions with application and process compliance. Involved staff include: SCBG grant coordinator, Agriculture Development Division (ADD) Section Manager, ADD Staff Attorney, ADD Bureau Chief, MDA Deputy Director, and MDA Director.

   MDA staff who are not involved in the making of Specialty Crop Block Grants are an available resource to all potential applicants however, unless MDA is listed as a partner on the grant, they may not participate in the writing of a proposal.

Applicants may also reach out to one of the State's Food and Ag Development Centers as a resource in developing their application.

6) **In the Objective table, is the description column an appropriate place to describe our project activities?**

Yes, the objective description column is the appropriate place to describe activities.

7) **Are the Objective Targets meant to be an audience or a number of people?**

Responses in this column should focus on the "what you wish to accomplish" requirement of the section. This may be an audience reached or a number of people responses may be more descriptive as well e.g. increased awareness, additional capacity, new knowledge generated.

8) **In previous years, this grant application has required a WorkPlan and Timeline, are these elements required for this year's grant?**

A workplan and timeline are not required to apply for the 2016 Specialty Crop Block Grant

9) **Are applicants required to design performance measures as described in Appendix D to the application?**

No, only those applications selected for inclusion in the Montana State plan will be required to develop performance measure.

10) **We're unsure at this point if our project will affect beginning farmer/ranchers or socially disadvantaged farmers/ranchers. Will checking 'no' in those sections negatively impact our proposal?**

Providing services to beginning farmer/ranchers and/or socially disadvantaged farmers/ranchers should be a primary focus of the grant in order to select "yes" in the corresponding boxes.

11) **May the wording of the performance measures in Appendix D be amended to better fit our project?**

The wording of performance measures is set by USDA and may not be amended.

12) **Can we count additional staff time (not outlined in budget) used on this project as match funds?**

Because of the added complication of counting match on your grant, except for instances where it is required by law, it is more practical to not count these funds. That said, yes, it is allowable.

13) **Where can additional information on allowable advertising expenses be locate?**

A detailed list of allowable and unallowable expenses can be found in the [Allowable and Unallowable Costs and Activities](#) document on the application website.

14) **Would it be to our advantage in any way to say that we will request additional training in managing federal grants?**

It is at the applicant's determination as to whether including training in the grant will be advantageous. However, federal grants training is an allowable expense for individuals listed in the personnel section of the proposal budget.